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ABSTRACT

The problems and usefulness of an evaluation plan used to evaluate the adult day care services at Parkside Human Services Corporation are examined in this report. After the initial agreed upon objectives of the evaluation are given, the basic problem of disagreement between practitioner and researcher on operation of the program during the evaluation is detailed. Modified objectives and a method of evaluation suitable to both practitioner and researcher are then listed. The three types of data collected (trend data, tracking data, and data on clients' and family caregivers' satisfaction with the day care program) are mentioned, followed by a description of how each type of data was used in the evaluation. An assessment of the evaluation methods concludes that although not scientifically rigorous, the method is practical because of its easy implementation. It is noted that this method can be used to determine progress in achieving desired changes in clients and to suggest hypotheses about modifying program activities to help clients maintain or resume progress. (ABB)

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EVALUATION OF ADULT DAY CARE: PERSPECTIVES OF THE RESEARCHER VERSUS THE PRACTITIONER

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ABSTRACT

EVALUATION OF ADULT DAY CARE SERVICE IS NECESSARY TO MEASURE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND TO PLAN THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS OFTEN HAVE DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE AND METHOD OF EVALUATION. THE RESEARCHER DEVELOPED AN EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR PARKSIDE HUMAN SERVICES CORPORATION'S OLDER ADULT PROGRAM THAT WAS USED TO CARRY OUT AN EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, THE STAFF WAS TRAINED TO IMPLEMENT THE EVALUATION METHOD FOR FUTURE USE. EVALUATION MEASURES INCLUDED CLIENT INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING, PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING, PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING, BOTH CLIENT AND FAMILY CAREGIVER SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM.

THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND RESEARCHER HAD TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT THE EVALUATION PLAN, AND TO TRAIN STAFF FOR FUTURE USE OF THE METHOD.

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INTRODUCTION

DURING PARTICIPATION IN THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S SUMMER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN 1983 AND 1984, THE RESEARCHER AND THE PRACTITIONER COOPERATED TO EVALUATE THE ADULT DAY CARE SERVICE AT PARKSIDE HUMAN SERVICES CORPORATION IN PARK RIDGE, ILLINOIS. IN 1983, AN EVALUATION METHOD WAS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED AT THE CENTER. IN 1984, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE STAFF IN USING THE EVALUATION PLAN OVER THE YEAR WAS REVIEWED, AND A MODIFIED PLAN WAS PROPOSED. DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN WHICH WAS USEFUL IN AN APPLIED SETTING REQUIRED MUCH DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND PRACTITIONER SINCE BOTH HAD DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON EVALUATION.

PROBLEM

BOTH PRACTITIONER AND RESEARCHER AGREED ON THE INITIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION:

1. TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE CLIENTS WERE ATTAINING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM.
2. TO DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES WERE THE CAUSE OF THE CLIENT'S ATTAINMENT OF THESE OBJECTIVES.
3. TO DETERMINE DEFICITS IN THE PROGRAM AND TO INDICATE WHERE IMPROVEMENTS WERE NEEDED.

THERE WAS A BASIC DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN PRACTITIONER AND RESEARCHER ON HOW THEY VIEWED RUNNING THE PROGRAM WHILE THE EVALUATION WAS CARRIED OUT.

DURING THE EVALUATION, THE PRACTITIONER FELT THAT THE PRIMARY OBLIGATION WAS TO ELIMINATE ANY DISRUPTION OF EXISTING SERVICES AND MAINTAIN POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY. IN CONTRAST, THE RESEARCHER FELT THAT CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE MADE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, IF THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE WAS TO MEET STANDARDS OF SCIENTIFIC RIGOR. THE PRACTITIONER FELT THE NECESSITY TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF CLIENTS AT THE CENTER SMALL SO THAT MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION COULD BE MAINTAINED FOR EACH CLIENT. BUT THIS ELIMINATED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE RESEARCHER USING CERTAIN STATISTICAL PROCEDURES REQUIRING LARGER SAMPLES. THE PRACTITIONER FELT THAT A CONTROL GROUP WAS NOT AVAILABLE. RANDOM ASSIGNMENT OF SUBJECTS TO TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS WAS NOT ETHICAL SINCE ALL CLIENTS SHOULD RECEIVE SOME PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, A WAITING LIST OF CLIENTS DID NOT EXIST, AND THE RATIONAL SELECTION OF A MATCHED GROUP OF CLIENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY DID NOT FIT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES CONCERNING PUBLIC RELATIONS (NOR WOULD IT MEET STANDARDS OF SCIENTIFIC RIGOR). THE RESEARCHER, HOWEVER, NEEDED A CONTROL

PROBLEM--2

GROUP TO MAKE ADEQUATE COMPARISONS TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF THE TREATMENT. THE PRACTITIONER FELT THAT THE DAY CARE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES (TREATMENT) SHOULD BE MULTIPLE (INVOLVING VARIOUS COMPONENTS), INDIVIDUALIZED FOR EACH CLIENT, AND CONTINUALLY CHANGING, IF SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF THE CLIENTS WAS TO BE MAINTAINED. BUT THIS LEFT THE RESEARCHER NO STANDARD TREATMENT TO HOLD CONSTANT OVER A TIME PERIOD THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR DETERMINING ITS' EFFECTIVENESS OR TO IDENTIFY WHICH COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM WERE MOST EFFECTIVE.

THE PRACTITIONER FELT IT IMPORTANT TO RECRUIT CLIENTS WHO RANGE FROM NORMAL TO PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY IMPAIRED TO BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY. BUT THE RESEARCHER THEN FOUND IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY OUTCOME MEASURES THAT HAD COMPARABLE MEANING WHEN APPLIED TO ALL THE CLIENTS.

METHODS

COMPROMISES AND INNOVATIONS IN THE EVALUATION METHOD HAD TO BE MADE TO INSURE UNINTERRUPTED PROGRAMMING IN DAY CARE DURING THE EVALUATION. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION HAD TO BE MODIFIED AND AN EVALUATION METHOD DEVELOPED THAT WAS PRACTICAL AND STILL USEFUL BY RESEARCH STANDARDS.

MODIFIED OBJECTIVES:

1. TO DETERMINE WHETHER CLIENTS WERE ATTAINING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES REGARDLESS OF A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.
2. TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CLIENT PROBLEMS.
3. TO DETERMINE CLIENT AND FAMILY CAREGIVER SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM.
4. TO DOCUMENT WHETHER CARE PLANS FOR CLIENTS, FORMULATED DURING CASE CONFERENCES, WERE BEING IMPLEMENTED.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

1. WITHIN A CLINICAL CONTEXT, A VARIANT OF THE SINGLE SUBJECT DESIGN WAS CONCEPTUALIZED. USING BASELINE DATA, EACH CLIENT SERVED AS HIS/HER OWN CONTROL, I.E., WAS COMPARED WITH HIM/HERSELF OVER TIME. (BASELINE DATA WERE NOT AVAILABLE FOR SOME CLIENTS, AS THE PROGRAM WAS ONGOING WHEN THE EVALUATION BEGAN.)
2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM WERE ANALYZED TO DETERMINE WHICH CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS COULD BE SURVEYED AND THE DEGREE OF CLIENT AND CAREGIVER SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM.

3. INSTRUMENTS WERE DEVELOPED OR SELECTED FROM A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE TO ASSESS CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS AND DEGREE OF PROGRAM SATISFACTION.

4. THREE TYPES OF DATA WERE THEN COLLECTED:

   A. <u>TREND DATA</u>. CONSISTED OF REPEATED MEASURES OF CLIENTS' CHARACTERISTICS (IDENTIFIED BY THE STATEMENT OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AS IMPORTANT TO BE MAINTAINED OR IMPROVED).

   B. <u>TRACKING DATA</u>. RECORDS OF THE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES OF EACH CLIENT. SUCH DATA WERE PERIODICALLY OBSERVED AND ENTERED ON SPECIAL FORMS SO THAT THE STAFF COULD MONITOR THE TYPES, DURATION AND FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH CLIENTS PARTICIPATED. (USE OF COMPUTER TO RETRIEVE THIS INFORMATION WOULD FACILITATE THIS MONITORING PROCESS.)

   C. <u>DATA ON CLIENTS' AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS' SATISFACTION WITH THE DAY CARE PROGRAM</u>. SPECIFICALLY DEVELOPED QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES WERE USED PERIODICALLY TO COLLECT DATA OVER TIME.

5. SUCH DATA WERE THEN MADE PART OF EACH CLIENT'S CASE RECORD, AND USED WITH OTHER INFORMATION IN CASE CONFERENCES TO ATTAIN THE ABOVE MODIFIED OBJECTIVES.

OUTCOMES

1. TREND DATA WERE USED TO EVALUATE WHETHER CLIENTS WERE IMPROVING, DECLINING, OR REMAINING STABLE RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM OVER TIME.

   THOSE CLIENTS WHO DECLINED IN ONE OR MORE CHARACTERISTICS WERE IDENTIFIED, WHICH ALERTED THE STAFF TO INVESTIGATE FOR ANY PARTICULAR PROBLEMS THEY MAY HAVE. CASE CONFERENCES INVOLVED RELATING THIS DATA TO OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLIENT.

2. TRACKING DATA WERE USED TO IDENTIFY PATTERNS OF ACTIVITIES THAT CLIENTS WERE PARTICIPATING IN OVER LONG TIME PERIODS. (IT WAS AMAZING THAT STAFF THEMSELVES DID NOT REALIZE THE CLIENT'S PATTERN OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UNTIL THEY ANALYZED THE TRACKING DATA.) THE TRACKING DATA REVEALED TO THE STAFF THAT CERTAIN CLIENTS RARELY OR NEVER PARTICIPATED IN CERTAIN ACTIVITIES, OVER-PARTICIPATED IN OTHER ACTIVITIES, LACKED A BALANCE IN VARIOUS TYPES OF ACTIVITIES, ETC.

   TRACKING DATA WERE ALSO USED TO DOCUMENT AND CONFIRM DECISIONS TO CHANGE A CLIENT'S PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. WITHOUT SUCH DOCUMENTATION, ONE COULD NOT KNOW WHETHER DECISIONS REGARDING CLIENT ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN A PROPER FASHION.

   THIS INFORMATION WAS HELPFUL IN CASE CONFERENCES TO SUGGEST MODIFYING THE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES OF CLIENTS WHOSE TREND DATA INDICATED DECLINE OR NO IMPROVEMENT. WITHIN A CASE CONFERENCE, SUCH HYPOTHESES COULD BE FORMULATED AFTER INCLUDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLIENT'S HOME LIFE AT THAT TIME, ETC.

OUTCOMES--2

3. MEASURES OF CLIENT AND FAMILY CAREGIVER SATISFACTION WITH ADULT DAY SERVICE WERE USED TO IDENTIFY COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM THAT NEEDED TO BE MODIFIED TO MAKE THE PROGRAM MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE USERS.

CONCLUSIONS

GIVEN THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF PRACTITIONER AND RESEARCHER, A SCIENTIFICALLY RIGOROUS EVALUATION PROCEDURE CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT TO DETERMINE WHETHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES ARE THE CAUSE OF ANY DESIRED CHANGES IN CLIENTS OR HOW SUCH PROGRAM ACTIVITIES OPERATE TO PRODUCE SUCH CHANGES.

MORE MODEST AND LIMITED OBJECTIVES OF EVALUATION CAN BE ATTAINED WITH THE PREVIOUSLY FORMULATED METHOD OF EVALUATION. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING DESIRED CHANGES IN CLIENTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED THROUGH TREND DATA, AND STAFF ALERTED TO THOSE WHO FAIL TO MAKE PROGRESS (REGARDLESS OF THE CAUSE). TRACKING DATA CAN BE USED TO SUGGEST HYPOTHESES AS TO HOW PROGRAM ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE MODIFIED TO HELP SUCH CLIENTS RESUME PROGRESS (OR AT LEAST MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT LEVEL OF FUNCTIONING). THIS IS DONE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A CASE CONFERENCE WHERE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO HELP MAKE MORE INTELLIGENT DECISIONS REGARDING A CHANGE IN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE METHOD OF EVALUATION FORMULATED IS VALID AND USEFUL. (IF ALL OR THE MAJORITY OF CLIENTS WERE CONTINUALLY MAINTAINING OR IMPROVING THEIR FUNCTIONING ACCORDING TO THE TREND DATA, ONE COULD TAKE THIS AS EVIDENCE OF PROGRAM SUCCESS.)

THE METHOD OF EVALUATION IS PRACTICAL IN THAT IT IS EASY TO IMPLEMENT GIVEN A DEDICATED STAFF AND APPROPRIATE SPACING OF COLLECTING DATA. SECONDLY, IT IS EASY FOR STAFF THEMSELVES TO LEARN AND MAINTAIN AN ONGOING EVALUATION SYSTEM.

FINALLY, IT IS A METHOD OF EVALUATION THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO MANY ADULT DAY CARE PROGRAMS TO ACCOMPLISH AT LEAST LIMITED OBJECTIVES OF EVALUATION. THE DIFFERENCE IN PERSPECTIVE BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND

CONCLUSIONS--2

PRACTITIONER REGARDING EVALUATION IS A COMMON PROBLEM, AND USUALLY COMPROMISES OF VARIOUS KINDS HAVE TO BE MADE IN CARRYING OUT ANY EVALUATION OF ADULT DAY CARE.